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for, although so many are beneath criticism, it is impossible, in the limited space provided for reviews, to state the reasons for their being so; and the only alternative, therefore, is to say nothing about them. Our readers, for instance, would be surprised were we to tell them the names of one half of the compositions forwarded to us, which are neither more nor less than gross plagiarisms; not merely containing here and there passages which come to us as old and valued friends, but being almost literally a copy of a previous song or piece already well known. Then, the inane ballads—many of them, by the way, not one bit worse than some preserved from contempt by the “royalty” system—are multiplied to such an extent that we almost begin to wonder how, if all these things are bought, good music can sell at all. Next in the list come the ambitious attempts of those who will not rest contented with maudlin trifles; but who having heard that “Beethoven wasn’t understood at first,” dash off with a heterogeneous mass of chords and mysterious passages, the whole forming a wild and disconnected piece, which they usually christen with a romantic title, believing that they are destined to show the deeply philosophical aim of music, and carry on the art where the great German composers have left it. In sacred works, it is evidently not considered necessary to have any original ideas at all; a dry succession of chords that will fit some religious words being thought sufficient for the purpose, provided the officious critics cannot discover any very glaring defects in musical grammar.

We could swell this catalogue of crudities to a much greater extent; but have already mentioned enough to show how onerous is the duty of a reviewer. If, from motives of kindness, he passes over these works, he is declared to be unjust and partial; if he notices them and exposes their weakness, he is termed bitter, and ungenerous to rising composers. One course only, therefore, is open—he must be true to art; and regard all compositions before him as having an abstract bearing upon its progress. Thus, a bad work by a known composer may remain unnoticed, whilst a good work by an unknown composer, may be reviewed at length. In pursuing this system, he will at least have the satisfaction of feeling that he is doing his duty according to the best of his ability; and although it may be too much to expect that a composer will like to be passed over in the crowd, it is perhaps, after all, better than being seized by the collar and publicly abused.

CONCERTS ANCIENT AND MODERN.

THE first of a series of Concerts under the above title was given at St. James’s Hall on the 1st ult., when Handel’s *Alexander’s Feast*, and Beethoven’s *Ruins of Athens* were performed. With a large chorus and excellent orchestra, the music should have gone better; but either through insufficiency of rehearsals, or want of intimacy with the forces under his command, Herr Schachner, the conductor, appeared scarcely able to exact that implicit obedience so essential to success. Practice, however, may remedy this; but we must dissent from the times in which he took several of the pieces; the “Dervish Chorus” in the *Ruins of Athens*, especially, being sung so slowly as to deprive it of its true character. Mr. W. H. Cummings sustained the trying tenor part in *Alexander’s Feast* extremely well, Madlle. Sinico battled with the music

of Handel as well as anyone trained as an Italian operatic singer could be expected to do; and the same may be said of Signor Foli. An agreeable relief was afforded by a performance of Mendelssohn’s *Capriccio* (Op. 22) by Madame Arabella Goddard, and an excellent rendering, by Madlle Titens, of the *scena* from *Der Freyschütz*.

MR. HENRY LESLIE’S CONCERTS.

THE eleventh Concert of the series was highly attractive to all who admire genuine unaccompanied choral music, several madrigals, including “Sweet honey-sucking Bees,” “My bonny Lass,” &c., being most agreeably mixed with compositions of the modern school. Mr. Sims Reeves and Mr. Santley were the principal vocalists; and a clever pianist, Mr. Frederick H. Cowen, made a highly favourable impression in a piece by Henselt, Liszt’s “Erl King,” and Chopin’s Ballade in G minor. The twelfth Concert was orchestral, and included Mendelssohn’s Italian Symphony and Beethoven’s Choral Fantasia, the pianoforte part being ably played by Madlle. Mehlig. Amongst the choral music was the fine “Hymn to Bacchus,” from *Antigone*, and a selection from *Edipus*. The solo vocalist was Miss Kellogg. A very excellent Concert was given on the 20th ult., for the Director’s benefit, Madlle. Titens and Mr. Santley being the principal singers, and Mendelssohn’s *Reformation Symphony* forming the chief orchestral feature in the programme.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE new season at this establishment opened on Saturday, the 2nd ult., with a musical performance of the utmost interest. The Concert took place in the Handel Orchestra, and commenced with Mendelssohn’s *Reformation Symphony*, which it is scarcely necessary to say, was played most magnificently, and received with the warmest demonstrations of pleasure by the vast audience. Mendelssohn’s *Edipus in Colonus* was the next important feature in the programme; and the effect of a trained choir, consisting of a thousand male voices, created a profound sensation; the noble choruses “Thou comest to the land,” “Ah, were I on yonder plain,” and “When the health and the strength are gone” developing the varied powers of this great choral body to the utmost advantage. The work was thoroughly appreciated by the audience; and the thanks of all lovers of real art are due to Mr. Manns (who conducted the performance), and to all concerned in the undertaking, for presenting this fine composition in so perfect a manner. The rest of the programme was composed of miscellaneous vocal music, the singers being Madlle. Kellogg, Madlle. Sinico, Madame Trebelli-Bettini, Signori Fraschini, Foli, and Gassier.

HER MAJESTY’S OPERA.

THE *début* of Signor Ferensi in the trying part of *Raoul*, in the *Huguenots*, has been an important event in the chronicle of the month at this house; and although he scarcely succeeded in convincing his hearers that his powers were equal to the task he had imposed upon himself, he proved that he had very many of the requisites of a sound vocalist; and it is possible that in other parts these qualifications may be more prominently and successfully displayed. Signor Mongini is a valuable addition to the company; and Madlle. Kellogg appears to have thoroughly ingratiated herself with the audience, her performance of *Ninetta*, in *La Gazza Ladra*, (a character which we hear was quite strange to her) having been especially well received, in addition to her impersonation of the parts already established in public favour. The production of *Don Giovanni* has proved a great success: the union of three such vocalists as Madlle. Titens, Madlle. Kellogg, and Madlle. Nilsson being in our modern operatic casts almost unprecedented.